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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6567
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 003759

SIPDIS

AF FOR P/DAS POWELL AND DAS SCHNEIDMAN
AF/S FOR A. RENDER, D. BOOTH, AND T. FAULK
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
PASS USAID FOR AFR/SA WJEFFERS AND A/AID RMCCALL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/01/10
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: INTIMIDATION AGAINST FARMERS AND MDC
CONTINUES IN POST-ELECTION PERIOD

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD.
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REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH WIDESPREAD FEARS OF A SPIKE IN VIOLENCE TO APRIL-MAY LEVELS FOLLOWING THE JUNE 24-25 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS HAVE SO FAR PROVEN UNFOUNDED, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DISTURBING SIGNS THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND ZANU-PF ARE CONTINUING THEIR PRE-ELECTION POLICY OF SPONSORING VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS. DESPITE HOPES THAT THE OCCUPATION OF FARMS BY WAR VETS WAS A PRE-ELECTION PLOY, FARM OCCUPATIONS HAVE CONTINUED AND ABOUT 25 ADDITIONAL FARMS HAVE BEEN INVADDED. FARMERS HAVE REPORTED INCREASINGLY INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOR BY WAR VETS ON THEIR FARMS, INCLUDING DEATH THREATS. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS SINCE THE ELECTION IN WHICH POLICE AND SOLDIERS HAVE BEATEN UP PEOPLE PERCEIVED AS SUPPORTERS OF THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC).

2. (C) THE PROBABILITY OF LARGE-SCALE ELECTION-RELATED RETALIATORY VIOLENCE IS RECEDING AS TIME PASSES. HOWEVER, WE NOTE THAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ORCHESTRATED FROM THE TOP AND THAT THE PRESIDENT MAY ONCE AGAIN FIND A NEW SPATE OF VIOLENCE -- AGAINST THE MDC, FARMERS, OR OTHER PERCEIVED OPPONENTS -- TO BE IN HIS POLITICAL INTEREST. END SUMMARY.

SITUATION ON FARMS REMAINS GRIM

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3. (C) BEFORE THE JUNE 24-25 PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS, THE OCCUPATION OF FARMS BY WAR VETS WAS USED AS AN ELECTION PLOY AIMED AT RALLYING THE PUBLIC BEHIND THE IDEA OF LAND REDISTRIBUTION. IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE VETS WERE LIKELY TO LEAVE THE FARMS AFTER THE ELECTIONS, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE. THE VETS HAVE REMAINED ON OVER 1000 OCCUPIED FARMS AND HAVE ESCALATED THE LEVEL OF VERBAL INTIMIDATION AIMED AT FARMERS AND WORKERS, INCLUDING THREATENED RETRIBUTION AGAINST MDC SUPPORTERS. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN ABOUT 25 NEW FARM INVASIONS SINCE THE ELECTIONS. IN A JULY 5 STATEMENT, THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS' UNION (CFU) NOTED THAT "THE ELECTIONS ARE OVER NOW AND YET THE EXTORTION, DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY, THEFT AND THE THREATS CONTINUE LARGELY UNABATED ON FARMS."

4. (C) A SPOKESMAN FOR THE CFU TOLD US THAT, FOLLOWING THE JULY 2 DEADLINE FOR FARMERS TO APPEAL THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF 804 FARMS, WAR VETS

DEMANDED THAT THE FARMERS LEAVE THEIR LAND IMMEDIATELY. IN CONTRAST TO THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD, DURING WHICH MANY FARMERS WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE RUNNING THEIR FARMS AS LONG AS THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE WAR VETS WERE IN CHARGE, FARMERS ARE NOW IN MANY CASES BEING FORCED OFF THE FARMS ALTOGETHER. TONY REELER (PROTECT), DIRECTOR OF THE AMANI TRUST, AN NGO THAT ASSISTS VICTIMS OF TORTURE AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, TOLD US THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS DEATH THREATS AGAINST FARMERS SINCE THE ELECTION. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CFU REPORTS THAT THE LEVEL OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY WAR VETERANS ON THE FARMS HAS DECREASED SINCE THE ELECTION. THERE HAVE BEEN NO POST-ELECTION REPORTS OF KILLINGS ON FARMS.

INTIMIDATION OF MDC MEMBERS

15. (C) A NUMBER OF EMBASSY CONTACTS, INCLUDING MDC LEADER MORGAN TSVANGIRAI, HAVE REPORTED TO US THAT MEMBERS OF THE POLICE AND MILITARY HAVE DESCENDED ON NIGHTCLUBS IN HIGH-DENSITY HARARE SUBURBS ON RECENT WEEKENDS AND ASSAULTED PATRONS THEY BELIEVED TO BE MDC SUPPORTERS. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE MIDLANDS PROVINCE CITY OF KWEKWE, WHERE MINISTER OF JUSTICE EMMERSON MNANGAGWA LOST TO THE MDC IN A HIGH-PROFILE RACE. TONY REELER HAS TOLD US THAT HIS ORGANIZATION IS RECEIVING A "CONTINUING STREAM" OF VICTIMS WHO ARE PROVIDING TESTIMONY OF CONTINUING VIOLENCE AND REPRISALS. HIS UNDERSTANDING IS THAT SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN IMPLICATED IN THE VIOLENCE TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN THE POLICE.

CONTINUED IMPUNITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 003759

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16. (C) A NUMBER OF EMBASSY CONTACTS HAVE EMPHASIZED TO US THAT THEY ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED NOT ONLY ABOUT CONTINUING VIOLENCE BUT ABOUT IMPUNITY FOR PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO ARRESTS IN ANY OF THE MORE THAN 30 CASES OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED MURDER SINCE FEBRUARY. POLICE HAVE FAILED TO LODGE CHARGES AGAINST PERSONS WITNESSES HAVE IDENTIFIED AS THE PERPETRATORS OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE, AND IN MANY CASES HAVE REFUSED EVEN TO TAKE AFFIDAVITS FROM WITNESSES. REELER POINTED OUT THAT, EVEN IN THE SMALL MINORITY OF CASES WHERE CHARGES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT, THE SEVERITY OF THE OFFENSE HAS BEEN UNDERSTATED -- FOR EXAMPLE, PEOPLE GUILTY OF MURDER HAVE BEEN CHARGED ONLY WITH PUBLIC VIOLENCE. REELER TOLD US THAT IN A NUMBER OF CASES, SUCH AS THE MURDER OF FARMER DAVID STEPEHENS, THE POLICE HAVE REFUSED TO MAKE ARRESTS EVEN THOUGH

THEY ADMIT THAT THEY KNOW WHO THE CULPRITS ARE.

17. (C) MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI COMPLAINED TO THE AMBASSADOR IN A JULY 10 MEETING (SEPTEL) THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS FALSELY IMPLICATED HIGH-LEVEL MDC MEMBERS IN INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE. HE NOTED THAT NEWLY ELECTED MDC MP JUSTIN MUTENDADZAMERA HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON JULY 6 FOR ALLEGEDLY SEVERELY ASSAULTING A MAN WEARING A "VOTE YES" (FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM) T-SHIRT. IN FACT, TSVANGIRAI SAID, THE INCIDENT HAD BEEN A "SCUFFLE" BETWEEN GRASSROOTS-LEVEL ZANU-PF AND MDC MEMBERS IN WHICH MUTENDADZAMERA WAS NOT INVOLVED.

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18. (C) THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUE TO CALL, AS THEY HAVE SINCE THE VIOLENCE BEGAN AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM IN FEBRUARY, FOR A COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATION INTO PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE. TSVANGIRAI TOLD THE AMBASSADOR ON JULY 10 THAT THE MDC WILL CALL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE VIOLENCE AS ONE OF ITS FIRST ACTS AS THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION.

LEVEL OF ORCHESTRATION

19. (C) OUR CONTACTS HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO SPECULATE ABOUT THE LEVEL OF ORCHESTRATION OF POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE. THE HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM, A GROUP OF TEN LOCAL LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS NGOS, CONTINUES TO ASSESS THE SITUATION AND PLANS TO ISSUE A BRIEF REPORT ON POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IN RECENT WEEKS. PHIL MATSHEZA (PROTECT), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION TRUST OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, TOLD DCM ON JULY 6 THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE A SENSE THAT THE POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IS BEING DIRECTED FROM SENIOR LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT AT THIS STAGE. ABSENT A DECISION BY PRESIDENT MUGABE TO LAUNCH ANOTHER SPATE OF ORCHESTRATED AGGRESSION, HE CONTINUED, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE CURRENT VIOLENCE WILL BURN ITSELF OUT IN A FEW WEEKS.

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10. (C) OTHERS, HOWEVER, HAVE POINTED OUT THAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE HERE IS GENERALLY ORCHESTRATED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF UNIFORMED SERVICE MEMBERS IN THE VIOLENCE POINTS TO HIGH-LEVEL COMPLICITY. THERE IS ALSO WIDESPREAD CONCERN THAT THE CURRENT RELATIVE QUIET, COMPARED TO THE APRIL-MAY PERIOD, MAY MERELY BE A LULL BEFORE MORE POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED RETRIBUTION FROM BOTH SIDES BEGINS. MANY OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE REMINDED US THAT THERE WAS A PERIOD OF RELATIVE PEACE BETWEEN FEBRUARY 13, WHEN PRESIDENT MUGABE'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM WAS DEFEATED, AND APRIL 1, WHEN THE WAR VETS ATTACKED A PEACEFUL NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY MARCH IN HARARE AND THE VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAND INVASIONS BEGAN IN EARNEST.

COMMENT

11. (C) THERE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD RELIEF THAT POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE HAS NOT REACHED APRIL-MAY LEVELS. IT IS LIKELY THAT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE RETALIATORY VIOLENCE IF ZANU-PF HAD LOST OR IF THE MDC HAD LOST BY A LARGER MARGIN. HOWEVER, GIVEN

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NEW FARM OCCUPATIONS, CONTINUED THREATS OF VIOLENCE
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AGAINST FARMERS AND FARM WORKERS, AND REPRISALS
AGAINST MDC MEMBERS BY UNIFORMED SERVICEMEN,
VIOLENCE REMAINS A SERIOUS CONCERN. WE BELIEVE THAT
THE CURRENT VIOLENCE, LIKE THE PRE-ELECTION
VIOLENCE, IS BEING ORCHESTRATED FROM THE TOP. THE
INVOLVEMENT OF UNIFORMED SERVICE MEMBERS IN VIOLENCE
IS A SIGN THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DEVELOPING NEW
TACTICS OF INTIMIDATION IN THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD.
THE OVERALL LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN COMING MONTHS IS
LIKELY TO DEPEND, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST, ON WHETHER
PRESIDENT MUGABE BELIEVES THAT VIOLENCE IS IN ZANU-
PF'S POLITICAL INTEREST. THE PRESIDENT AND ZANU-PF
ARE REELING FROM THE PARTY'S ELECTION DEFEAT AND MAY
NOT HAVE DECIDED WHAT NEXT STEPS TO TAKE. EMBASSY
WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THE
SITUATION. END COMMENT.

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